

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method, executed by a node on a network, of transmitting identifying information about the node, the method comprising:

- (a) determining a current ~~node identifier~~ *NIC address* value;
 (b) retrieving, from a data storage at the node, a former ~~node identifier~~ *NIC address* value for the node; and
 (c) transmitting the current node identifier value and the former ~~node identifier~~ *NIC address* value.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein ~~(1) the value of the node identifier for any particular node in the network is dependent on one or more node identification attributes of that node, and (2) determining the current node identifier value includes an attempt to detect the then-current values of said one or more node identification attributes.~~ *NIC address value*

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the attempt to detect ~~said one or more node identification attributes fails to detect at least one of said node identification attributes,~~ *the then-current NIC address value is unsuccessful* and further comprising (i) retrieving, from a data storage at the node, a stored value containing the result of a past live detection of the ~~said one or more node identification attributes,~~ *the then-current NIC address* referred to as a previously-detected ~~node identifier~~ *NIC address* value; and (ii) transmitting the previously-detected ~~node identifier~~ *NIC address* value.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein (i) the node includes a network interface card, and (ii) the node identification information includes a network interface card value, referred to as a NIC address value.

1 *a* 5. The method of claim ~~4~~¹, wherein the NIC address value comprises a signature
2 portion and a pseudorandomly generated portion.

a 1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the former ~~node-identifier~~^{NIC address} value is redundantly
2 stored in multiple partitions within the data storage at the node.

a 1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein (x) each copy of the former ~~node-identifier~~^{NIC address}
a 2 value is associated with a timestamp, and (y) retrieving the former ~~node-identifier~~^{NIC address} value
3 comprises retrieving the respective copy associated with the most recent timestamp.

1 8. A method, executed by a server node on a network, for recording, in a data-
2 base, information about a client node, comprising:

3 (a) receiving information from the client node, said information including

a 4 ~~node-identification~~^{NIC address} information for the client node that includes (i) a current ~~node-~~^{NIC}
a 5 ~~identifier value~~^{address}, and (ii) a former node-identifier value; and

6 (b) storing, in a record in the database associated with the node-
7 identification information, the current node-identifier value and the former node-identifier
8 value.

a 1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein each of the current node-identifier value
2 and the former node-identifier value is a NIC address value.

a 1 10. The method of claim ~~9~~⁸, wherein the NIC address value comprises a signa-
2 ture portion and a pseudorandomly generated portion.

1 11. A program storage device readable by a processor in the node of a speci-
 a 2 fied one of claims 1 through ~~11~~ ^{3, 5 through 7, and 21 through 23,} and encoding a program of instructions including instruc-
 3 tions for performing the operations recited in the specified claim.

1 12. A program storage device readable by a processor in the server node of a
 a 2 specified one of claims 8 ~~through 10~~ ^{and} and encoding a program of instructions including
 3 instructions for performing the operations recited in said specified claim.

1 13. In a node on a network, a data store comprising a machine-readable data
 2 structure accessible to a processor in the node and containing node-identification infor-
 a 3 mation for the client node that includes (i) a current ^{NIC address} ~~node-identifier~~ value, and (ii) a for-
 a 4 mer ^{NIC address} ~~node-identifier~~ value.

9 1 14. The data store of claim 13, wherein each of the current node-identifier
 2 value and the former node-identifier value is a NIC address value.

a 1 15. The data store of claim ¹³ ~~14~~, wherein the NIC address value that constitutes
 2 the current node-identifier value includes a signature portion and a pseudorandomly gen-
 3 erated portion.

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16. In a node on a network, a data store comprising:
- (a) a plurality of machine-readable data structures accessible to a processor in the node;
 - (b) each said data structure containing node-identification information for the client node that includes (i) a current node-identifier value, and (ii) a former node-identifier value.
 - (c) each said data structure being associated with a timestamp.

17. The data store of claim 16, wherein the current node-identifier value is a NIC address value.

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18. The data store of claim 17, wherein the NIC address value comprises a signature portion and a pseudorandomly generated portion.

19. In a server node on a network. that includes a client node, a machine-readable data structure accessible to a processor in the server node, comprising a current NIC address value for the client node and a former NIC address value for the client node.

- $a^2 \geq$

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